

## MINUTES OF THE CITY COUNCIL

CITY OF AUSTIN, TEXAS

Recessed Meeting

May 15, 1947

8:00 P.M.

Council Chamber, City Hall

The meeting was called to order, with Mayor Miller presiding.

## Roll call

Present: Councilmen Bartholomew, Glass, Johnson, Mayor Miller, and  
Councilman Thornberry - 5

Absent : None

Present also: Guiton Morgan, City Manager; Trueman E. O'Quinn, City Attorney; W. E. Seaholm, Director of Public Utilities; and J. D. Huffman, Finance Director.

Present also: Members of the School Board, Dr. Russell A. Lewis, Superintendent of Schools, and interested citizens.

The Mayor stated that the meeting was called at the request of the School Board to discuss the question of additional revenue for the schools.

The following statement in writing was then submitted by R. W. Byram, President of the School Board:

"The purpose of our request for this meeting was to have an opportunity to present to the City Council the problem of financing the city school system.

Since both the Council and the School Trustees are dependent upon the same taxpayers for income, it would appear wise to attempt cooperation between these two groups. Each is charged with providing particular services, the money for which must come from the same source.

Last fall the School Trustees discussed with the Council a separate school tax. The Board was advised that the Council contemplated a revaluation program. It was suggested that the Board await the outcome of the reappraisal. At that time the explanation was made that two elections would be necessary to put into effect a separate tax, which would take considerable

time. It appeared at that time that an estimate of the reappraisal would be available about the first of May.

This was important because at least two months would be required to hold these elections and city finance officials advised us that the tax rate should be in effect by September 1 because of the vast amount of clerical work necessary to getting out the tax bills.

It is our understanding that the reappraisal has not progressed to the point where any one can foresee exactly what it will add to the rolls; but the most liberal estimate is that it will add \$40,000,000.

On Monday night at the regular meeting of the school board, it was voted to adjust salaries to this anticipated valuation. We were able to pay a teacher scale ranging from \$2,000 to \$3,000.

This is \$400 short of the base pay of \$2,400 which the Board has advocated and which is necessary to obtain the calibre of teachers we believe the school children of Austin should have. This is what is needed to meet competition.

To institute a pay scale starting at \$2,400 will required a total of \$342,289 more than will be provided if valuations are increased by \$40 millions. To get this money from ad valorem taxes would require a tax increase of 31.7 cents per \$100.

This money can come from two sources:

A larger share in the total city-school tax rate of \$2.50 on the \$100 valuation; or,

A separate school tax.

We know by their public statements that several, if not all, of the City Council members are thoroughly in sympathy with the objectives of the School Board. Because we feel that this is a common problem of the citizens of Austin, we are here to ask your advice and counsel concerning means of achieving those objectives.

If it is possible to finance the program without disturbing the \$2.50 maximum in the city charter, that seems preferable to us. However, we are not sufficiently familiar with the city's finances to know whether it would be possible to take 30 cents more of the \$2.50. The Board has deferred definite plans until we could have this discussion with the City Council. "

The question as to the most feasible method of raising the \$342,289.00 additional revenue that the School Board stated would be required to provide a salary minimum of \$2400 to \$3600 for school teachers was then discussed at length. It was pointed out by Mr. Byram that a separate school tax would require two elections, a charter amendments election authorizing

a separate school tax and an election to secure approval of a new tax rate, which would require not less than sixty days. As an alternative, the proposal that a higher percentage of assessment for the schools was also discussed at considerable length.

Following the discussion, it was the sense of the meeting that the Mayor's proposal that no action be taken until the final report of the reappraisal survey is in, and that any election be postponed until after that time, be approved and accepted.

Upon motion, seconded and carried, the meeting was then recessed, subject to call of the Mayor.

Approved: Tom Miller  
MAYOR

Attest:

Helene Miller  
CITY CLERK